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PA/HO Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
June 21, 2006

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Authority *ND 969053*By *SP* NARA Date *8/7/02*

Department of State

TELEGRAM

*Pol 23-9 / IRAQ*~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ 390

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-20 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-06 H-02 INR-06

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

T-03 OMB-01 RSR-01 /108 W

060413

R 131020Z JUL 72  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7858  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BEIRUT 7605

SUBJ: TROUBLE IN NORTHERN IRAQ

1. SUMMARY: STRIFE REPORTED IN NORTHERN IRAQ IN PAST TEN DAYS APPARENTLY THREATENED TO SPARK LONG-AWAITED GENERAL CONFRONTATION BETWEEN BARZANI FORCES AND BATHIST REGIME. WHILE TROUBLE NOW SEEMS TO HAVE ABATED SOMEWHAT, TENSION BETWEEN TWO SIDES IS REPORTEDLY HIGHER THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE MARCH 1970 AGREEMENT BETWEEN BARZANI AND GOI. SOME KURDISH SYMPATHIZERS HERE BELIEVE LATEST CLASHES ARE ONLY PRELUDE TO MORE SERIOUS OUTBREAKS IN FUTURE, AS IRAQI GOVT -- EMBOLDENED BY SOVIET SUPPORT AND ITS SUCCESSFUL NATIONALIZATION OF IPC -- TAKES FURTHER STEPS TO INCREASE PRESSURE ON BARZANI AND NIBBLE AWAY AT GAINS HE ACQUIRED IN MARCH 1970 SETTLEMENT. OTHERS AGREE THAT CONFRONTATION IS IN OFFING, BUT CONTEND IT IS BARZANI WHO IS BENT ON PROVOKING IT. END SUMMARY.

2. CONSIDERABLE PRESS ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSED HERE OVER PAST TEN DAYS ON REPORTS OF SPORADIC CLASHES BETWEEN KURDS AND ARABS (INCLUDING ELEMENTS OF IRAQI ARMED FORCES) IN AREAS AROUND MOSUL, KIRKUK AND SULAYMANIYYAH IN NORTHERN IRAQ. WEIGHING THESE REPORTS AGAINST INFO GLEANED FROM OUR CONTACTS AMONG IRAQI/KURDISH

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EXILES IN BEIRUT, WE HAVE PUT TOGETHER FOLLOWING SKETCHY (AND SOMETIMES CONTRADICTIONARY) ACCOUNT OF WHAT TOOK PLACE AND WHAT TO EXPECT IN FUTURE.

3. ACCORDING TO IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, SHOOTING BEGAN IN FIRST WEEK OF JULY BY UNRULY KURDISH YAZIDI TRIBESMEN IN SINJAR DISTRICT WEST OF MOSUL (ONE OF SEVERAL AREAS CONTESTED BETWEEN BARZANI AND BA'THIST REGIME SINCE THEY CONCLUDED SETTLEMENT IN MARCH 1970). REPORTS BY FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS VISITING BAGHDAD ALLEGE THAT YAZIDIS WERE MADE RESTLESS BY NEWS OF IRAQI TAKE-OVER OF IPC, SINCE TRIBESMEN FEARED THIS MEANT CUT-OFF OF REGULAR PAYMENTS OF "PROTECTION MONEY" THEY HAD BEEN ACCUSTOMED TO RECEIVE FROM COMPANY. STRIFE APPARENTLY SPREAD QUICKLY FROM MOSUL PROVINCE (WHERE IRAQI ARMY REPORT-EDLY CLASHED WITH KURDS AT DKP HEADQUARTERS IN MOSUL) TO AREAS AROUND KIRKUK AND SULAYMANIYYAH. IN ALL THREE REGIONS, LOCAL KURDS -- JOINED BY ELEMENTS OF BARZANI FORCES -- ARE SAID TO HAVE SKIRMISHED WITH IRAQI POLICE AND ARMY CONTINGENTS, SUPPORTED BY IRAQI AIR FORCE. FIGHTING REPORTEDLY CLAIMED SOME 30-50 LIVES ON BOTH SIDES, INCLUDING THAT OF GHANEM AL 'ALI, BA'THIST QAIMMAQAM OF SINJAR DISTRICT, WHO WAS ASSASSINATED BY "UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS" ON JULY 3, AND SEVERAL IRAQI ARMY OFFICERS.

4. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS FROM BAGHDAD, GENERAL GOI-KURDISH CONFRONTATION WAS AVERTED ONLY THROUGH RESTRAINT SHOWN BY BOTH BARZANI AND BA'THIST LEADERS, NOTABLY PRES BAKR. LATTER REPORTEDLY SENT TWO KURDISH MINISTERS IN IRAQI CABINET TO MEET WITH BARZANI IN SUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO AVERT ESCALATION OF FIGHTING AND CALM THINGS DOWN. (ONE MINISTER, NAFEZ JALLAL HOWEIZI, WAS LATER KILLED IN AUTO ACCIDENT AFTER LEAVING BARZANI'S HEADQUARTERS). BARZANI THEN TELEGRAPHED BAKR, DENYING THAT HIS PESH MERGA HAD INSTIGATED INCIDENTS, OFFERING TO HELP APPREHEND QAIMMAQAM'S ASSASSINS, AND CALLING AGAIN FOR WITHDRAWAL OF IRAQI FORCES FROM CONTESTED NORTHERN AREAS AND FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY GOI OF UN-FULFILLED CLAUSES OF MARCH 1970 AGREEMENT. LATEST REPORTS FROM BAGHDAD IN BEIRUT PRESS JULY 12 NOTE THAT "ALTHOUGH TENSION STILL PREVAILS IN NORTH, IT IS NOT

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EXPECTED TO LEAD TO ALL-OUT WAR." CURIOUSLY, PRESS ACCOUNTS MAKE NO MENTION OF ANY ROLE PLAYED BY SADDAM HUSSEIN TAKRITI DURING THIS CRISIS.

5. OUR CONTACTS AMONG LOCAL KURDISH/IRAQI EXILES CONFIRM MANY ELEMENTS OF ABOVE STORY, BUT PROVIDE SEVERAL RADICALLY DIFFERENT TWISTS. THEY CONTEND THAT TROUBLE BETWEEN KURDS AND ARABS IN CONTESTED AREAS AROUND MOSUL, KIRKUK AND SULAYMANIYYAH ACTUALLY PRECEDED OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE IN SINJAR DISTRICT, ALTHOUGH THEY AGREE THESE TROUBLES BECAME MORE VEHEMENT AFTERWARDS. THEY REGARD STORY ABOUT DEPENDENCE OF 30,000 YAZIDI TRIBESMEN ON IPC "BAKSHEESH" AS BA'ATHIST FAIRY TALE, NOTING THAT MANICHEAN YAZIDIS HAVE LONG MADE COMMON CAUSE WITH BARZANI AND THAT THEIR PARAMOUNT SHAYKH, TAHSIN BEY, HAS JOINED THE MULLA IN HIS MOUNTAIN RETREAT. (THEY ADMIT THAT KURDS AS WHOLE, HOWEVER, ARE UNHAPPY WITH IRAQ GOVT'S ECONOMY DRIVE WHICH HAS PRODUCED DRASTIC CUTBACKS IN EXPENDITURES IN CONTESTED NORTHERN AREAS.) AS FOR ASSASSINATION OF GHANEM AL 'ALI, THEY NOTE THAT PESH MERGA HAD BEEN "GUNNING" FOR HIM FOR SOME TIME, AND THEY REJOICE AT HIS DEMISE. SOME OF THEM EVEN SPECULATE THAT BARZANI MAY HAVE ENGINEERED DEATH OF JALLAL HOWEIZI, HIS FORMER (1969) COMRADE IN ARMS WHO HAD ALLEGEDLY SUCCUMBED TO SOFT MINISTERIAL LIFE IN BAGHDAD AND BECOME BA'ATHIST STOOGES.

6. OUR CONTACTS, WHO ARE ANTI-BA'ATHIST, CONTEND THAT RECENT INCIDENTS IN NORTHERN IRAQ ARE LONG-AWAITED SIGNAL OF BEGINNING OF KURDISH UPRISING AGAINST BAGHDAD GOVT, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER BARZANI OR GOI INITIATED THEM. SOME SAY PRESENT LULL IS TEMPORARY, DICTATED BY FACT THAT BARZANI HAS NOT YET WORKED OUT FINAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR WHOLESALE KURDISH REVOLT WITH HIS ALLIES IN TEHRAN.

7. COMMENT: WE ARE UNABLE EVALUATE ACCURACY OF CONFLICTING REPORTS. BA'ATHIST SPOKESMAN IN BAGHDAD MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO PUT BEST FACE ON SITUATION THAT IS SOURCE OF VITAL CONCERN TO THEM. ON OTHER HAND, WE ARE ONLY TOO AWARE OF BOASTFULNESS AND WISHFUL THINKING WHICH MARKS STATEMENTS OF BARZANI SYMPATHIZERS IN

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BEIRUT. IN OUR VIEW, ALL THAT CAN BE SAID WITH RELATIVE  
CERTAINTY IS THAT KURDISH-BATHIST RELATIONS ARE TENSER  
THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE MARCH 1970 AGREEMENT.  
HOUGHTON.

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